



SEDGWICK COUNTY, KANSAS
COMMUNICATIONS

NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

National Children of Alcoholics Week: Time to Raise Awareness

(Sedgwick County, Kansas) –February 9 –15, 2003 is National Children of Alcoholics Week and a time to raise awareness in our communities about the struggles these children experience.

Children who live with an alcoholic are affected by the alcoholic behavior. Children learn to react to his/her behavior. They often experience anxiety, anger, denial, broken promises, neglect, and physical, emotional or sexual abuse. In addition, alcoholism runs in families, and children in these families are four times more likely to become alcoholics than other children.

A child in such a family may have a variety of problems:

- **Guilt:** The child may see himself or herself as the main cause of the mother's or father's drinking.
- **Anxiety:** The child may worry constantly about the situation at home. He or she is afraid the alcoholic parent will become sick or injured, and may also fear fights and violence between the parents.

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- **Embarrassment:** Parents may give the message that there is a terrible secret at home. The ashamed child does not invite friends over and is afraid to ask anyone for help.
- **Inability to have close relationships:** Because the drinking parent has disappointed the child many times, he or she often does not trust others.
- **Confusion:** The parent will change suddenly from being loving to angry, regardless of the child's behavior. A regular daily schedule, which is very important for a child, does not exist because bedtimes and mealtimes are constantly changing.
- **Anger:** The child feels anger towards the parent for drinking, and may be angry at the non-alcoholic parent for lack of support and protection,
- **Depression:** The child feels lonely and helpless to change the situation.

Children of alcoholics can survive and grow by building on their strengths, changing their attitudes, being kind to the alcoholic, and learning to detach from their loved ones' problem. That's where Alateen, a fellowship of young people whose lives have been affected by a loved one's alcoholism, can help. Alateen meetings focus on the solution and not the problem. Alateen is a safe place where everyone can talk.

"Children who live with an alcoholic parent are no doubt affected by the alcoholic behavior," said Sedgwick County Commission Chairman Tim Norton. "We want people to know that COMCARE can provide assistance if they are in this situation."

If you are interested in finding out more about Alateen meetings in Sedgwick County, call COMCARE of Sedgwick County 660-7540. You can find more information about COMCARE's programs and services on their web site, www.sedgwickcounty.org.

Source: National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism

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